Canadian Centre
For Foreign Policy
Development

Centre Canadien
pour le développement
de la politique étrangère

Policy Options

**REPORT ON VISIT TO CANADA:
GREAT LAKES ISSUES**

Canadian Centre for Legislative Exchange

125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2
Phone: 613 944 4150 (Communications) 613 944 0391 (Project/Fund Information) 613 992 3690 (Events Information)
Fax: 613 944 0687 **Web-site: http://www.cfp-pec.gc.ca**

104-00084/

Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

Centre canadien pour le développement de la politique étrangère

125 promenade Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2
Telephone/Téléphone : 613.944.8278 www.cfp-pec.gc.ca Fax/Télécopieur : 613.944.0687

REPORT ON VISIT TO CANADA: GREAT LAKES ISSUES

Canadian Centre for Legislative Exchange

November 20, 1996

2003.1E

ISBN: E2-452/1996E-IN
0-662-31736-X

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international

Canada

Centre for
Legislative Exchange

Centre d'échanges
interparlementaires

Barbara Reynolds
Executive Director
Directrice éxecutive

Fourth Floor, 250 Albert Street
Ottawa, Canada K1P 6M1
Tel: (613) 237-0143
Fax: (613) 235-8237
E-mail: ag021@freenet.carleton.ca

Quatrième étage, 250, rue Albert
Ottawa, Canada K1P 6M1
Tél: (613) 237-0143
Fax: (613) 235-8237
E-mail: ag021@freenet.carleton.ca

REPORT ON VISIT TO CANADA
GREAT LAKES ISSUES
November 1996

Background

On July 19, 1996 a contribution agreement with the Centre for Legislative Exchange was approved for up to $40,000 to arrange educational visits to Canada for U.S. legislators and congressional staff. There was also a provision that once this sum had been expended, additional monies might be available. All visits were to be completed by March 31, 1997.

With the change from a grant to a contribution agreement during the fiscal year 1995-96, the Centre had worked out procedures with officials at headquarters in Ottawa and the Canadian Embassy in Washington for consultation about possible subjects and, particularly where staff were involved, about possible invitees.

Determining the topics for visits took considerable time and effort on both sides. Once the agreement had been signed, the Centre initiated discussions with the Department about possible visits, dates, participants and size of groups. Considerable time was spent determining how visits focused on bilateral issues might help to build awareness of Canadian foreign policy issues among U.S. legislators.

In early October the Canadian Embassy determined that it would be preferable to organize one major visit on Great Lakes issues that would use approximately three-quarters of the funding rather than a number of smaller visits. Originally, this topic had been proposed during the 1995-96 fiscal year and indeed some preliminary work had been undertaken on visit. However, Embassy officials had concluded that the timing was not suitable as the federal and provincial governments were still working out a common approach to various issues.

The Centre has had a long involvement in organizing visits on issues relating to the Great Lakes, starting with a 1985 bilateral visit to Burlington, Toronto and Mackinac. This was followed in 1989 with another bilateral visit to Windsor and Detroit and a further bilateral visit in 1991 to Quebec City. Shortly after the 1994 congressional elections, the Centre also co-sponsored a Roundtable on the Great Lakes for U.S. and Canadian legislators in Washington D.C. in January 1995.

Board of Directors - Conseil d'administration

David A. Golden
Chairman-Président

Brian Crane
Paul Crête, député
Simon de Jong, MP
Peter Dobell

David Kilgour, MP
Senator Gerald Ottenheimer
Senator Bill Rompkey

Douglas C. Rowland
Hon. Mitchell Sharp, PC
Bob Speller, MP

02/26/97 10:43 FAX 613 235 8237 PARL/CEN 004/008

In proposing a visit on Great Lakes issues, the Canadian Embassy in Washington identified two individuals as key contacts in the Embassy and in Environment Canada and included them as participants in the visit: Sheila Tooze, Environment Section of the Embassy and Susan Nameth, Manager, Great Lakes Environment Office of Environment Canada. Both individuals were knowledgeable about the subjects under discussion and contributed to a comprehensive and interesting program. In addition, Sheila Tooze had an extensive network of contacts on Capitol Hill and she advised them early about the date and nature of the proposed visit. Furthermore, she arranged a briefing for all U.S. participants shortly before their departure to give a general outline of the Canadian perspective on Great Lakes issues. During the concluding session, several staffers spoke about the need for some type of on-going contact with the Embassy to continue discussions. This type of support by the Embassy was very helpful in ensuring a successful and well attended program. A copy of the report on this visit prepared by Sheila Tooze is attached.

Ethics Committees

The Centre's programs have the approval of the Ethics Committees of both Houses of Congress. However, in recent years there has been considerable monitoring of activities by the Ethics Committees, especially by the Senate Committee. Last year the Senate Ethics Committee asked the State Department to obtain an opinion from the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa about the non-partisan nature of the Centre. As the Centre has a close working relationship with the U.S. Embassy, it was able to ensure that this request was answered promptly, thus facilitating the participation of Senate staffers.

This year, the Senate Ethics Committee decided to initiate a new procedure for granting approval by preparing a series of questions on the legal status, work and activities of the Centre which it sent via the State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa. The State Department also decided to involve the Congressional Relations Unit of the Canadian Embassy in Washington in the processing of this response. While the responses to the questions were readily prepared and the approval was given to Senate staffers to participate in this visit, this does illustrate the importance attached to clearance by the Ethics Committees. Considerable time and effort were expended by a number of players in both Ottawa and Washington in meeting the Committee's request for information. A copy of the Centre's response is attached.

02/26/97 10:43 FAX 613 235 8237 PARL/CEN 005/008

Great Lakes Congressional Staff Visit

While the overall aim of this visit was to indicate the high priority that Canada gives to the protection of the Great Lakes, there was a special emphasis on air quality issues as well as showing successful remedial action plans such as the Hamilton Harbour clean-up. The visit took place from November 20 to 22, 1996 in several sites along the Great Lakes: Toronto, Burlington, Hamilton, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Niagara Falls. The program included a variety of formats: briefings in boardrooms overlooking the Great Lakes, laboratory tours, walks along the Great Lakes and special meal functions. A copy of the agenda is attached.

Nine staffers from the offices of Great Lakes Members of Congress participated in this visit along with Sheila Tooze of the Canadian Embassy and Susan Nameth of Environment Canada. The costs for Sheila Tooze were paid from the contribution agreement while Environment Canada paid the costs for Susan Nameth other than meals included in the program.

There was a good political and geographic balance among the nine staffers: four Senate and five House; four Republican and five Democrat; four Michigan, three Ohio, one Minnesota and one from Great Lakes Task Force. Unfortunately, the dates selected for the visit were not convenient for staffers from the offices of New York legislators.

The Centre enjoys a reputation for organizing visits that cover a variety of issues, move along efficiently, are well-balanced and include diversity of viewpoints and approaches. This exposure to a variety of players and their views is one of the cornerstones for clearance by the Ethics Committees.

The visit began with an overview presentation by Glen Bailey, Director of the U.S. Relations Division on the close, interdependent economic relationship between Canada and the United States. It helped to set the stage for subsequent sessions by emphasizing that although both countries share common goals, they have taken quite different approaches to achieving these goals. Throughout the discussion period in other sessions, participants often referred to comments made by Glen Bailey. The printed material distributed in this opening session was also a useful reference tool that will likely be used by participants in the future.

This session also helped to initiate informal discussions throughout the visit about the Canadian legislative system, the work of MPs and the activities of constituency offices. While some general background documents comparing the two systems of government had been included in the briefing documents, the Centre did not arrange a separate session on this subject. Rather, the director who has worked on Parliament Hill for some 23 years and is the author of several booklets on MPs'

02/26/97 10:44 FAX 613 235 8237 PARL/CEN 006/008

offices, responded informally to the various questions and comments about the Canadian legislative process.

The Great Lakes portion of the visit opened with briefings on particular issues, namely, water quality, toxics and air quality. As these session took place at the Downsview offices of Environment Canada, staffers were also able to tour the air quality monitoring labs and the weather centre. At the offices of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, participants heard about how the Trust has successfully served as a broker for the various interest groups involved in the Toronto waterfront. They were especially impressed by the development of a waterfront trail from Toronto to Niagara-on-the-Lake and asked numerous questions about how to get stakeholders to come together. The first day concluded with a dinner with guests from industry and non-governmental organizations.

The priorities of the provincial government were highlighted during breakfast on the second day when Ontario Minister of Environment and Energy Norm Stirling met with the group. As chair of the Council of Ministers of Environment who had been meeting in Toronto the day before, he took the opportunity to outline areas of federal and provincial co-operation. Jim Bradley, a former Liberal Minister of Environment, also participated in the meeting and emphasized the need for co-operative action on both sides of the border.

The group then travelled to Burlington where there were briefings and labs tours at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters. Special presentations were given on endocrine disruptors and the virtual elimination strategy. This was followed by a joint presentation on the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan by government officials and local citizens. A walk to the wildlife restoration area located beside the Burlington office provided an opportunity to see not only the plant and animal life but also the restored recreational area for wind-surfers. The second day concluded in Niagara-on-the-Lake with a tour of a local winery.

The final day opened with a presentation on Niagara River toxics and the Canadian biomonitoring programs and upstream and downstream monitoring programs. Since one of the monitoring sites was located in an old lighthouse in Niagara-on-the-Lake, our visitors were able to walk to the site and speak to the technician on duty.

During the concluding session in Niagara Falls, participants spoke about their impressions of the visit and what they had learned. They seemed to appreciate the balance of technical presentations and political discussions. Several mentioned the value of having an opportunity to learn about a particular region of Canada and its political system. One participant concluded that he did not have a clear counterpart in Canada and asked with whom should he work on Great Lakes issues. Another spoke about how to include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in resolving these

02/26/97 10:44 FAX 613 235 8237 PARL/CEN 007/008

issues. The need for some type of forum to discuss Great Lakes issues and to continue working together was voiced by a couple of participants. Several visitors were impressed by the Hamilton Remedial Action Plan and tried to draw conclusions about any lessons that could be applied elsewhere. This session ended with a discussion on the difficulty in finding the right mix of regulation and voluntary action.

Conclusion

The **Canada-United States Legislative Visits Program** has a two-fold mandate: to increase the knowledge of U.S. legislators and staffers on a specific issue and to foster mutual understanding. This visit provided nine Congressional staffers from Great Lakes states with an opportunity to learn at firsthand about the Canadian approach to dealing with Great Lakes issues, especially, air quality. It also demonstrated the nature and extent of the Canadian commitment to protection of the Great Lakes. At the same time, the visit helped to build awareness among U.S. staffers of the nature and extent of the close, interdependent economic relationship between our two countries as well as the dynamics of the Canadian political system.